



General Assembly

Sixty-fourth session

79th plenary meeting

Wednesday, 24 March 2010, 3 p.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Christian (Ghana), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 6.05 p.m.

Agenda item 52 (continued)

Follow-up to and implementation of the outcome of the 2002 International Conference on Financing for Development and the 2008 Review Conference

High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development

The Acting President: We have come to the end of the fourth High-level Dialogue of the General Assembly on Financing for Development. I would like to express my appreciation to delegations — more than 70 in total — for actively participating in this two-day event. Their constructive statements in the plenary meetings and round tables have greatly contributed to the success of this gathering.

I am grateful to the Secretary-General for delivering an opening address and outlining steps needed to reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

I am also encouraged by the active participation and contributions of the key institutional stakeholders, intergovernmental organizations, other international development institutions, civil society and the private sector. The engagement of all partners is crucial to the financing for development follow-up process.

The proceedings of this meeting have followed the success of the Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development and the main part of the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly. I would like to state with great satisfaction that Member States and other stakeholders in the financing for development process have engaged in a truly interactive dialogue, in the spirit of the Monterrey Consensus and the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development.

This Dialogue is particularly important as it is taking place in the run-up to the September summit on the MDGs. The wealth of ideas, initiatives and recommendations participants have put forward during these two days will serve as important substantive input to the preparations for the September event, in order to make its outcome more meaningful and actionable.

Given the time constraints, it is not possible to properly summarize, without shortchanging, the rich policy discussions that took place over the past couple of days. I will present a full summary of the Dialogue at a later date. At this time, I wish to highlight a few key points emerging from our discussions.

In the general debate on the overall theme, “The Monterrey Consensus and Doha Declaration on Financing for Development: status of implementation and tasks ahead”, many speakers stressed the domestic mobilization of resources as the key source of financing for development. A number of speakers noted that developing countries must be afforded the policy

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space to carry out countercyclical policies and ensure national ownership of their development goals. Many speakers also emphasized that continuing efforts were needed to create an enabling environment for private investment, including through appropriate Government policies to encourage long-term investment.

The need for national efforts to be supported by a favourable international environment was also emphasized. In particular, the need for a speedy and successful conclusion to the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations was widely recognized, with many speakers stressing the importance of realizing the development promise of that Round's outcome. Several speakers called for the strengthening of market access commitments and for the provision of adequate levels of Aid for Trade, especially to address the specific concerns of the least developed and landlocked countries.

Many participants noted that all official development assistance (ODA) commitments must be fulfilled and that innovative sources of financing would be an important complement rather than an alternative. Moreover, it was emphasized that additional assistance was needed to deal with new and emerging issues, including the financing of climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts. Governments should work towards the conclusion of a comprehensive global legal framework within the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

There was a widespread call for strengthening international cooperation for development in all its aspects, including North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation. It was stressed that these forms of cooperation should be mutually supportive and complementary. The role of public-private partnerships was also noted.

Some speakers pointed out that a broad spectrum of financing for development, including private capital flows, trade and remittances, should be mobilized. Also, it was noted that private capital flows to developing countries should be integrated into development strategies and refocused from the speculative application of funds towards productive investment. Some speakers made the point that promoting sustainable development was an important aspect of corporate social responsibility.

It was understood that least developed countries with special needs faced serious challenges resulting from the financial crisis, further undermining their attainment of the MDGs. The international community should assist those countries through increased and more effective ODA, greater market access complemented by Aid for Trade, reduced conditionalities, debt relief and risk mitigation mechanisms that encourage foreign investment. Countries emerging from conflict and natural disasters need well-coordinated, long-term assistance.

According to several speakers, the financial crisis highlighted the need to improve the governance of the global economic and financial system, including increased voice and participation for developing countries. It was stressed that the United Nations must play a central role in discussions on global economic governance to ensure policy coherence, coordination and the cooperation of all relevant stakeholders.

Some speakers focused attention on the financing for development follow-up mechanism, pointing out that it should be further strengthened to effectively monitor the implementation of the decisions made in Monterrey and Doha.

Round table 1 focused on the reform of the international monetary and financial system and its implications for development. Many speakers underscored the importance of enhanced macroeconomic and financial policy coordination and reform. The use of the Group of 20 (G-20) for these purposes was seen as a positive development. However, a much better solution would be to assign this function to a representative organization, such as International Monetary Fund (IMF).

It was noted that there should be more emphasis on macroeconomic surveillance of developed countries and large emerging economies, as well as financial markets. Also, more attention should be given to the implications of those countries' policies for the rest of the world.

Many participants stressed that the recent proposals on governance reform of the Bretton Woods institutions were an important, but only the first step forward. The reform should address all aspects of governance, including quota shares, the composition of boards, the process of management selection and staff diversity.

Many speakers emphasized the need to strengthen the role of the United Nations in discussions on global economic governance, the financing for development needs of developing countries, and international development cooperation. Some speakers stressed the importance of making the roles of the G-20 and the United Nations mutually complementary.

Several speakers underscored the importance of the reform of the global reserve system, while others noted that this was a longer-term process. In this regard, it was suggested that the role of special drawing rights should be significantly increased to serve international reserve and development purposes.

According to several speakers, despite recent important and positive changes, IMF lending could be further improved. The lending should become more automatic and predictable. Also, the IMF should collaborate more with regional monetary institutions.

It was stressed that finance should be restored to its proper role of serving the needs of the real economy. It was suggested that more effective and strict financial regulation was needed, including the regulation of cross-border capital flows.

Some speakers pointed out that the world needs an international mechanism for sovereign debt workouts. Such a mechanism was indispensable to the orderly and timely resolution of debt crises.

Round table 2 addressed the theme "The impact of the current financial and economic crisis on foreign direct investment and other private flows, external debt and international trade". It was noted that the nature and intensity of the crisis and the speed and strength of the subsequent recovery have varied and will continue to vary between different regions and countries, as well as between different types of financial and trade flows. This needs to be factored into any analysis of the crisis and of attempts to prevent similar crises in the future.

The point was made that the crisis may have served to help the international community to focus on some worrying trends that had become evident during the pre-crisis period. These included the surges of short-term unproductive and volatile flows into a number of emerging economies with high interest rates, as well as the increasing role of speculation in driving commodity prices. It was not clear yet that the proper lessons had been learned.

Several speakers stated the importance of reaching an appropriate balance between economic stability and development. The adoption of countercyclical policies and instruments should be considered, as well as such measures as an international currency transactions tax and national capital controls.

The need to address the plight of many middle-income countries was referred to by some participants. It was pointed out that many countries of that group were vulnerable to the effects of the crisis and were highly indebted. Yet, they lack proper access to concessional finance.

In terms of preventing future crises, it would be helpful to develop early warning systems that would, for example, identify emerging asset bubbles. In order to ensure the authority of such a system, a panel of internationally renowned independent experts was mentioned as one suggested response.

Round table 3 discussed the role of financial and technical development cooperation, including innovative sources of development finance, in leveraging the mobilization of domestic and international financial resources for development.

Given the past performance of donor countries and current financial pressures, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) now predicts a \$17-billion shortfall in 2010, including a \$13-billion shortfall to Africa, in reaching the 2005 aid commitments. Learning from the experience of donors who succeeded in fulfilling their commitments to increasing aid, all donors should establish clear and realistic medium-term spending targets for aid, and meet them with year-by-year increases.

The importance of universal access to the formal financial sector, including a full array of financial services, especially for those with low and uncertain incomes who required more financial management to smooth their consumption over time, was noted. It was suggested that more attention be paid to financing small and medium-size enterprises in a fashion similar to traditional microfinance. It was recalled that small and medium-size enterprises were responsible for 70 per cent of job creation in the OECD countries. The need for a global association of small and medium-size enterprises, similar to that for microfinance, was also pointed out.

In the context of new initiatives in innovative finance for development, there was a call for a timely introduction of the financial transaction tax as a source of funding dedicated to development, with potential to contribute to the fight against communicable diseases, such as tuberculosis and malaria, child mortality, early deaths and malnutrition.

Some participants expressed concern about relying on innovative sources of finance in terms of aid effectiveness, while others expressed their expectation that innovative financial mechanisms would yield additional funding to achieve the MDGs and tackle specific problems, such as illicit capital flows and tax evasion. Some delegations called to further explore innovative sources of finance, while others expressed reluctance to support non-voluntary taxes, such as an airline solidarity tax, to raise funds.

It was recalled that the European Union was awaiting a report of the task force on financial transactions tax, to come out in May. The forthcoming discussions would include other instruments of innovative financing. Many participants recognized the potential of innovative mechanisms to finance health, climate change and food security.

Some participants suggested that the United Nations should play a greater role in exploring innovative sources of development finance. It was recalled that the General Assembly had mandated an informal event on innovative sources of finance in the run-up to the September summit on the MDGs.

Some participants called for enhanced partnership with the private sector and civil society to make aid more effective and to transfer knowledge and skills to recipient countries and the organizations involved in capacity development in the field.

On the emergence of non-traditional donors, there was a call for further outreach to collect reliable and uniform statistics on their aid contributions.

The informal interactive dialogue had the theme "The link between financing for development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals: the road to the 2010 high-level event". There was broad consensus that achieving the MDGs required the scaling up of action on the part of developing and developed countries alike. MDG 8, on a global partnership for development, was based on the principles enshrined in the Monterrey Consensus and

reaffirmed in the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development. Its implementation calls for the concerted and sustained effort of all relevant stakeholders, including Member States, institutional stakeholders, civil society and the business sector.

The recent world fuel, energy, financial and economic crises had led to lower incomes and higher unemployment in developing countries. They threatened the hard-won and uneven gains made in the fields of poverty reduction, health and education. Moreover, they further undermined progress on those goals, falling far short of agreed targets, especially the reduction of maternal mortality, the promotion of gender equality and environmental sustainability.

It was recognized that Goal 8 was crucial to mitigating the adverse impact of the confluence of recent crises on development, especially in countries with special financing needs. In that context, it was noted that the international community must deliver on its ODA commitments, enhance aid effectiveness, reduce aid volatility, fulfil the development promise of the Doha Round, increase Aid for Trade to compensate for loss of tariff revenue, extend measures to achieve debt sustainability, lower pharmaceutical prices in developing countries, and enhance access to technology to deal with climate change and increase agricultural productivity. Innovative sources of finance had proved their effectiveness in providing additional resources for the MDGs, and should be explored further.

It was also stated that good governance at all levels was crucial to the attainment of the MDGs. Domestically, developing countries should continue to implement national development strategies aimed at poverty reduction, job creation and sustained economic growth. At the international level, there was a need for comprehensive reform towards a more equitable, participatory and development-oriented financial architecture.

As the Secretary-General said yesterday, the United Nations has an important role to play in ensuring a robust and inclusive intergovernmental process to realize international commitments on financing for development and meeting the Millennium Development Goals. Looking back at our discussions over the past couple of days, it seems that we have been able to live up to that expectation. I am confident

that we shall proceed in this promising way towards the September summit and beyond.

The General Assembly has thus concluded the fourth High-level Dialogue on Financing for

Development, as well as the current stage of its consideration of agenda item 52.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.



General Assembly

Sixty-fourth session

80th plenary meeting

Thursday, 25 March 2010, 3 p.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Hackett (Barbados), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 7 (continued)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

The Acting President: Members will recall that the General Assembly concluded its consideration of agenda item 116, entitled "Follow-up to the commemoration of the two-hundredth anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade", at its 47th plenary meeting, on 16 November 2009. In order for the Assembly to consider the draft decision before it today in document A/64/L.50, it will be necessary to reopen the consideration of agenda item 116.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to reopen its consideration of agenda item 116?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 116 (continued)

Follow-up to the commemoration of the two-hundredth anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade

Draft decision (A/64/L.50)

The Acting President: We shall now proceed to consider draft decision A/64/L.50. In connection with

the draft decision, I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat to make a statement.

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): This oral statement is made in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

Under the terms of the operative paragraph of draft decision A/64/L.50, the General Assembly would decide to convene, on 25 March 2010, a special commemorative meeting of the General Assembly on the occasion of the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade. It is envisaged that the special commemorative meeting of the General Assembly to be held on 25 March 2010 would comprise one meeting, with simultaneous interpretation from, and into, all six official languages. Although the meeting has not been included in the calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations for 2010 and constitutes an addition to the calendar, it has been determined that the required resources for servicing the meeting could be accommodated by using the resources allocated for servicing the General Assembly, provided that the Assembly does not meet at the same time when the special commemorative meeting is held.

Consequently, should the draft decision be adopted by the General Assembly, there would be no programme budget implications for the biennium 2010-2011.

The Acting President: I thank the representative of the Secretariat for his clarifying statement.

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The Assembly will now take action on draft decision A/64/L.50, entitled "Special commemorative meeting of the General Assembly on the occasion of the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft decision A/64/L.50?

Draft decision A/64/L.50 was adopted.

Special commemorative meeting of the General Assembly on the occasion of the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade

The Acting President: In accordance with the decision just taken, the General Assembly will now hold a special commemorative meeting on the occasion of the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

The President of the General Assembly has had to travel. He has given me the task, in my capacity as Acting President of the Assembly, of reading out a statement on his behalf. I have the honour to deliver the following statement on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, President of the General Assembly.

"We are gathered here today for the third annual International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade. This commemoration by the General Assembly signifies the international community's respect and honour for the millions of Africans who were violently removed from the African continent and transferred to centuries of bondage in North and South America and in the islands of the Caribbean.

"The Durban Conference against Racism firmly established the transatlantic slave trade as the greatest scourge of modern life and a grotesque crime against humanity. Today is an occasion not only to enhance awareness about the past, but also to make a commitment that never again should human beings display such inhumanity towards other human beings. The United Nations must indeed continue to deploy all efforts in order to bridge the knowledge gap. Major historical events and facts that have now been ascertained cannot continue to be ignored.

Ignorance and concealment are obstacles to peace and dialogue. The United Nations, including UNESCO, must be vocal and visible on this issue and help break the silence that still surrounds the many tragic aspects of slavery and the slave trade.

"I commend the States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the African Group for taking the lead on this annual commemoration. All of us fully embrace this initiative and, with one voice, pay homage to the victims, say 'no' to this horrific act of oppression and call attention to the lingering traces of prejudice which, sadly, continue as a legacy of the enslavement of Africans. I also commend the complementary initiative led by the CARICOM States to establish a permanent memorial at the United Nations to the memory of all the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, and I call on all Member States and the international community to provide all-out support for this memorial.

"This year's commemoration, with its theme, 'Expressing our freedom through culture', underscores one of the many approaches of the resistance movement which the enslaved Africans employed to eventually bring an end to this heinous crime. Throughout the Americas, the enslaved Africans, despite their horrendous conditions, were able to preserve aspects of their culture which continue to this day, as manifested in music, song, dance, language, cuisine and sports.

"We welcome the special significance attached to this year's commemoration, which is dedicated to Haiti as the first successful result of the resistance of the enslaved, which overthrew the forces of oppression and cast aside the shackles of slavery, bringing an end to the rule of the masters. We must pay special tribute to the leaders of the Haitian revolution, Toussaint Louverture, Jean-Jacques Dessalines and others, who, by their revolutionary action, ushered in the demise of slavery in the Caribbean, South America and the United States, and forced the breaking of the silence on this horror.

"The slave trade is among the worst violations of human rights in history. Due to its

duration, its scale and the legitimization that was accorded to it, the transatlantic slave trade is unique, maybe the first example of globalization. We should never forget that this was the biggest deportation in history. Slave trade and slavery have affected all continents and have caused great upheavals that have impacted modern societies. It is unfortunate and totally unacceptable that in this age we are still struggling to confront slavery and slave trade and its various manifestations, such as human trafficking. The slogan 'Never again' therefore needs to be transformed into action and visible results. That will be the best homage to the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade."

I now give the floor to the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, Mr. Kiyotaka Akasaka, who will deliver a statement on behalf of the Secretary-General.

Mr. Akasaka (Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information): I am very honoured to deliver the following message on behalf of the Secretary-General.

"Slavery is abhorrent. It is explicitly prohibited by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the United Nations has reaffirmed this principle many times, including in the Durban Declaration, adopted at the 2001 World Conference against Racism. But slavery and slavery-like practices continue in many parts of the world. Slavery is mutating and re-emerging in modern forms, including debt bondage, the sale of children and the trafficking of women and girls for sex. Its roots lie in ignorance, intolerance and greed.

"We must create a climate in which such abuse and cruelty are inconceivable. One way is by remembering the past and honouring the victims of the transatlantic slave trade. By reminding ourselves of past injustices, we help to ensure that such systematic abuse of human rights can never be repeated.

"Those who controlled the transatlantic slave trade made huge profits from death, misery and exploitation. They presided over the forcible removal of millions of people from their homelands in Africa. Slave traders and owners subjected these forced migrants and their

descendants to the most callous physical, mental and emotional abuse.

"We see the legacy of the transatlantic slave trade in all the countries it affected. If we are wise, we would use this legacy for good. We will recognize that it is clear evidence of what can happen if intolerance, racism and greed are allowed to triumph.

"We should also take heart from those who, with great courage, succeeded in ending this institutionalized abuse. Their bravery ensured the eventual triumph of the values the United Nations represents: tolerance, justice and respect for the dignity and worth of all human beings.

"Today we salute all the victims of slavery, and we commit ourselves to ensuring that this practice, in all its forms, is eradicated."

The Acting President: I thank the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information for reading out the message from the Secretary-General.

Before proceeding further, I should like to consult Member States about inviting our keynote speaker, Professor Tony Bogues of Brown University, to make a statement on this occasion. If there is no objection, may I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly, without setting a precedent, to invite Professor Tony Bogues of Brown University to make a statement at this special commemorative meeting?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Equatorial Guinea, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the African Group on this important occasion of commemorating the anniversary of the abolition of transatlantic slavery.

I wish to convey our sincere appreciation to our brothers and sisters in the Caribbean Community for sustaining the momentum generated by their initiative in 2007, for which the African Group maintains its full and unconditional support.

Slave trade and slavery remain one of the most horrific, painful and brutal chapters, in the history not only of Africa alone, but of mankind as a whole.

Slavery and slave trade are crimes against humanity. They are at the heart of profound social and economic inequalities, hatred, intolerance, racism and prejudice which continue to affect people of African descent in many parts of the world. It is in this regard that measures aimed at countering the continued impact of slavery and slave trade, as provided for, *inter alia*, in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action of 2001 and the outcome document of the Durban Review Conference of 2009, are relevant and valid.

As we commemorate the end of slavery and honour the memory of the innocent victims of these heinous crimes, we need also to be mindful of the contemporary forms of slavery, in all its manifestations. We must work together and use this event to renew our resolve to eliminate these new forms of slavery, which constitute blatant violations of human rights.

I wish to recall that in 2007, when we first commemorated this anniversary in the General Assembly, there was overwhelming support for the initiative, as well as strong condemnation of slavery and the slave trade. That momentum must be sustained. We need to continue with education and outreach programmes to ensure that this part of our history is not forgotten. In this regard, I wish to commend the Committee of Permanent Representatives and the Department of Public Information for their outreach efforts.

One way to sustain expanded outreach efforts is the erection of a permanent memorial to and remembrance of the victims of slavery and slave trade. We therefore welcome the initiative being led by States members of the Caribbean Community and the African Union in this regard. We further recognize the importance and necessity of sustained voluntary contributions in order to achieve, in a timely manner, the goals behind erecting the permanent memorial, and urge the international community to translate the support it has voiced into tangible contributions to the Trust Fund. Let us say "never again".

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Afghanistan, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Asian States.

Mr. Ayoob (Afghanistan): It is my honour to speak on behalf of the Asian Group as we gather here to observe the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

The transatlantic slave trade persisted for four centuries. That is longer than most of our nations have existed. It forever changed the landscape of the world, not only for those who were ripped from their homes and transplanted thousands of miles away over the course of generations, but also for those who bear the legacy of those centuries today, in the Americas, in Africa and in Europe.

It is therefore both fitting and just that we dedicate ourselves this year and every year to improving awareness not just of the manifold tragedies of the slave trade, but also of the breadth and magnificence of human strength in the face of terrible adversity. The struggles of these hundreds of thousands of men and women are at the very heart of this Organization, an Organization dedicated to the principles of peace, sovereignty and the fundamental equality of all men and women.

In this regard, I have the honour to thank His Excellency the Secretary-General, UNESCO and the United Nations Secretariat for their efforts to educate and spread awareness of the causes and consequences of the transatlantic slave trade and the need to address the racism and inequality that still exist today as a result. It is our hope that this Organization can lead the world in memorializing not only the suffering, but also the courage, of those who bravely dedicated their lives to restoring human dignity and guaranteeing equality among all.

Though thankfully the transatlantic trade in human beings has ended, injustice, racism and exploitation remain real and terrible problems all over the world. We should intensify our efforts to address discrimination, racism and social marginalization in line with the Durban Declaration.

Let us find inspiration in the strength of our ancestors in order to fearlessly confront these modern-day tragedies with the same courage and dedication so as to ensure that generations of tomorrow will enjoy a world that truly embodies the ideals enshrined in our Organization.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Ukraine, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. Sergeyev (Ukraine): It is a particular honour for my delegation to take the floor on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States at this special

commemorative meeting of the General Assembly on the occasion of the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

Since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 62/122, designating 25 March as the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade, we have been gathering every year to remember the more than 20 million people who suffered from the barbaric and inhuman practice of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. Today's commemoration also gives us an opportunity to pay tribute to the courage and moral strength of all those who campaigned for the abolition of slavery.

There is still a substantial knowledge gap about the 400-year-long slave trade and its lasting consequences throughout the world, including the important contributions made by slaves to the development of societies in the lands of their enslavement. As States Members of the United Nations that have solemnly pledged to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights and the dignity of human beings, we must never forget the tragic reality and consequences of slavery.

We want to thank the Secretary-General for his continued efforts in developing an educational outreach strategy to increase awareness and to educate future generations about the causes, consequences, lessons and legacy of the 400-year-long slave trade.

By learning about the past, young generations can fully understand the present and prepare a better future together in a world free of all types of enslavement, injustice, discrimination and prejudice. They must also be alert to every violation of human rights and make it their duty to act to prevent all future transgressions against any people.

We should also like to recognize and commend the leadership of Jamaica. The members of the Group of Eastern European States were honoured to support General Assembly resolution 64/15, "Permanent memorial to and remembrance of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade", and welcome the appointment of a Goodwill Ambassador to help raise awareness of the legacy of slavery.

Today's commemorative event also serves as a reminder that not all shadows of slavery have been banished. Even today, millions of human beings are

subjected to practices that fall within the United Nations definition of enslavement. As the United Nations Member States, we must be vigilant in opposing all modern forms of slavery, including trafficking in persons. We should unite our efforts, in partnership with international organizations, civil society and the private sector, in order to put an end to the heinous crime that shames all of us.

We have gathered here today to remember those who suffered from slavery and to honour all those who helped to put an end to it. Let us draw wisdom from those lessons of the past to guide us in the future.

The Acting President: Before giving the floor to the representative of the next regional group, I now invite Ms. Elsie Laurence-Chounoune to read out an extract from the autobiography of Olaudah Equiano, known as Gustavus Vassa, the African.

Ms. Laurence-Chounoune: My name is Elsie Laurence-Chounoune and I am a staff member from Haiti, and I am also President of the Haitian Association at the United Nations.

It is my special honour and privilege to play a role in this solemn event that means so much to the entire world, especially the descendants of the direct victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade.

We have read, heard and watched personal accounts of the tragic system of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, which continued for 400 years — 400 years. Today, we shall hear the account of an 11-year-old child, who experienced the anguish of abduction, the middle passage, abuse, fear, physical and mental torture and the ritual of a name change that impacted his identity. His name was Olaudah Equiano, also known as Gustavus Vassa, the African. This is the story.

"We are almost a nation of dancers, musicians and poets. Thus, every great event, such as a triumphant return from battle or other cause of public rejoicing, is celebrated in public dances, which are accompanied with songs and music suited to the occasion. The assembly is separated into four divisions, which dance either apart or in succession, and each with a character peculiar to itself.... We have many musical instruments, particularly drums of different kinds, a piece of music which resembles a guitar, and another much like a stickado. These last are

chiefly used by betrothed virgins, who play on them on all grand festivals.

"As our manners are simple, our luxuries are few. The dress of both sexes is nearly the same. It generally consists of a long piece of calico, or muslin, wrapped loosely round the body, somewhat in the form of a highland plaid. This is usually dyed blue, which is our favourite colour ...

"...

"Our land is uncommonly rich and fruitful, and produces all kinds of vegetables in great abundance. We have plenty of Indian corn, and vast quantities of cotton and tobacco. Our pineapples grow without culture; and are about the size of the largest sugar-loaf and finely flavoured. We have also spices of different kinds, particularly pepper. ... All our industry is exerted to improve those blessings of nature. Agriculture is our chief employment; and everyone, even the children and women, are engaged in it. ... Everyone contributes something to the common stock, and as we are unacquainted with idleness, we have no beggars.

"...

"... As I was the youngest of the sons, I became, of course, the greatest favourite of my mother, and was always with her. ... I was trained up from my earliest years in the art of war; my daily exercise was shooting and throwing javelins; and my mother adorned me with emblems, after the manner of our greatest warriors. In this way I grew up till I was turned the age of eleven, when an end was put to my happiness ... Generally, when the grown people in the neighbourhood were gone far in the fields to labour, the children assembled together in some of the neighbours' premises to play, and commonly some of us used to get up a tree to look out for any assailant or kidnapper that might come upon us; for they sometimes took those opportunities of our parents' absence to attack and carry off as many as they could seize. ... But, alas! ere long it was my fate to be thus attacked and carried off ... One day, when all our people were gone out to their works as usual and only I and my dear sister were left to mind the house, two men and a woman got over our walls, and in a moment seized us both and, without giving us time to cry out or make

resistance, they stopped our mouths and ran off with us into the nearest wood. Here, they tied our hands, and continued to carry us as far as they could ... When we went to rest the following night, they offered us some victuals; but we refused it, and the only comfort we had was in being in one another's arms all that night and bathing each other with our tears. But, alas! we were soon deprived of even the small comfort of weeping together. The next day proved a day of greater sorrow than I had yet experienced, for my sister and I were then separated while we lay clasped in each other's arms. It was in vain that we besought them not to part us; she was torn from me and immediately carried away while I was left in a state of distraction not to be described. I cried and grieved continually; and for several days I did not eat anything but what they forced into my mouth. ...

"...

"The first object which saluted my eyes when I arrived on the coast was the sea, and a slave ship, which was then riding at anchor, and waiting for its cargo. These filled me with astonishment, which was soon converted into terror, when I was carried on board. I was immediately handled and tossed up to see if I were sound, by some of the crew; and I was now persuaded that I had gotten into a world of bad spirits and that they were going to kill me. Their complexion differing so much from ours, their long hair and the language they spoke (which was very different from any I had heard) united to confirm me in this belief. ... When I looked round the ship too and saw a large furnace or copper boiling and a multitude of black people of every description chained together, every one of their countenances expressing dejection and sorrow, I no longer doubted of my fate; and, quite overpowered with horror and anguish, I fell motionless on the deck and fainted. ... At last, when the ship we were in, had got in all her cargo, they made ready with many fearful noises, and we were all put under deck so that we could not see how they managed the vessel. But this disappointment was the least of my sorrow. The stench of the hold while we were on the coast was so intolerably loathsome, that it was dangerous to remain there for any time, and some of us had

been permitted to stay on the deck for the fresh air; but now that the whole ship's cargo were confined together, it became absolutely pestilential. The closeness of the place, and the heat of the climate, added to the number on the ship, which was so crowded that each had scarcely room to turn himself, almost suffocated us. This produced copious perspirations, so that the air soon became unfit for respiration, from a variety of loathsome smells, and brought on a sickness among the slaves, of which many died, thus falling victims to the improvident avarice, as I may call it, of their purchasers. This wretched situation was again aggravated by the galling of the chains, now become insupportable; and the filth of the necessary tubs, into which the children often fell, and were almost suffocated. The shrieks of the women, and the groans of the dying, rendered the whole a scene of horror almost inconceivable."

Those are the words of an 11-year-old child, in the middle of a nightmare. Let us think about that for a moment. But he survived and overcame this ordeal. Equiano's survival instinct was characteristic of that of millions of other enslaved people who succeeded in breaking free from their shackles.

I shall now read to the Assembly a short extract from a poem capturing the last battle of Vertières, which freed Haiti from slavery. This poem, entitled "Vertières", was written by a famous Haitian poet named Massillon Coicou.

(spoke in French)

"They are here, the heroes of the Adige and the Rhine;

They have surrounded Bréda, Pierre-Michel, and Champin and Vertières

With their canons of bronze:

And these mounts flanked by murderous mouths,
These improvised forts, are hereby condemned
To annihilate all these obstinate blacks.

"But still the native army holds strong
In the belief it can take, in but one leap,
The innumerable obstacles, and go, swiftly,
All the way to the gates of the Cape to raise its standard!

Vertières, above all, is here; it is Vertières,
That will hinder the marvellous leap of the native army.

"There, like a proud eagle with its piercing gaze,
The tricolour flies, threatening;
Here, the blacks, spread all across the plain;
The blacks, so many — crowding, eager,
breathless,
Surging with the desire to shed the light of the
Flame of reality upon their dark beautiful dream!

"Dessalines appears. Calm, he plans, he aligns:
And then around him casting his eagle's eye,
He orders Capois under the cannons.
(O! Whoever you may be, hear these names,

"The most divine embodiment of heroism!)
Capois leapt. Under him, driven by the noble
pride
That imbues every man down to his soul,
The legions of blacks push on to their goal.

"The cannon-fire roars and crushes them; they
panic And pull back; Capois reinspires them;
their courage redoubles
And, relentless, onward to the fort,
Capois inspires them to scorn death.

"They go.
Look at them! Stoic and magnificent,
Wounded, riddled, bleeding, their numbers swell
under the
Ceaseless cannonburst spewing from Vertières,
A miracle dazzling the eyes of the enemy!
They need to take out Charrier — the
inaccessible;

But, still, before them, the impassable colossus,
Formidable, wild, never-ending,
Still, in its ravine, Vertières remains standing!
The cannon-fire roars. An immense breach
Splits the attackers, but the ranks regroup,
And prouder still, more beautiful, bayonets
raised,
En masse, they continue still, falling, but not
giving in
And amid the waves on waves of shell and
gunshot,
When death passes, blind, crushing these walls of
the living,
O! so many, and thousands more, are here to
Remake the magical scene,
Re-form the wall and strive onwards.

O! imagine

Freedom! It is for you — it is to adorn a temple
Worthy of your splendour on this sky-blue isle.

It is to offer you their worship and devote their honour

"That these souls, drenched in shadows and despair,
Write their epic tale as fire rains down!
On your tablets of engraved bronze, O! Freedom,
Those fashioned by the demigods of noble antiquity,
Engrave the memory of these epic hours
When, armed with his own irons and with spades,
The black leapt, springing from his nothingness,
And took his last giant step!

"And you, O! black people, sing! ... This day
For you a new destiny does bring!"

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Panama, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. Thalassinós (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms that "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights". Such a fundamental humanitarian principle takes on special meaning on a day such as today, when we observe the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

Today we pause to pay tribute to the millions of Africans who were violently removed from their native lands and subjected to slavery — something that must not be forgotten. But we must also pay tribute to the extraordinary legacy contributed to our societies by populations of African descent. And we must reaffirm our commitment to promoting social equality for populations of African descent in our societies, as well as combating racial discrimination elsewhere in the world.

Slavery and the transatlantic slave trade rank among the worst violations of human rights in human history. We must educate and inform present and future generations in order to raise awareness of the causes and consequences of the 400 years of the slave trade. We must continue strengthening the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and promote the Universal Declaration on Human Rights in order to highlight the dangers of racism and prejudice so that future generations understand the historical lessons and consequences of the slave trade. The positive cultural heritage of

freedom is also worthy of celebration by all of humanity.

The States members of the Latin American and Caribbean Group participate vigorously in this commemoration and request that all States Members of the United Nations contribute to the Trust Fund for the permanent memorial and participate actively, at the national and international levels, in the activities taking place this week.

This year, the commemoration of the International Day of Remembrance of Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade focuses on a central theme that underscores the efforts of enslaved peoples to resist their captors' attempts to rob them completely of their identity. These efforts are reflected in the safeguarding of original elements of their cultural heritage through the retention of belief systems, oral traditions, social values, music, dance, art, food, folklore and religious practices and festivals, resulting in a vibrant mixture of cultural expression.

As we reflect on the theme of this commemorative day, "Expressing our freedom through culture", we celebrate the continuing and central relevance of this cultural heritage, passed down from generation to generation as a medium of identity and, ultimately, as a celebration of freedom from slavery.

At the same time, it is our duty to resolve to end for future generations the legacy of hatred, bigotry, racism and prejudice that is the result of slavery. To that end, we pause today to remember those who lived and died under the system of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, which we must not forget.

Finally, we pay tribute to the Haitian people, who today are suffering from terrible human and natural calamities, for Haiti was the first republic in Latin America and the Caribbean to achieve independence and to decree the abolition of slavery.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Germany, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

Mr. Wittig (Germany): It is a particular honour for my delegation to address the General Assembly on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States as we gather today to commemorate the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade.

Slavery is a disgrace for humankind. It is one of the most fundamental attacks imaginable against human rights and human dignity. Article 4 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights explicitly states that "No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms".

Today we pay tribute to the millions of victims of the transatlantic slave trade who were forcibly removed from their homelands in Africa and subjected to the most cruel physical and mental abuse, exploitation and, very often, death. Theirs is a story of abuse and suffering that lasted almost 400 years. I am glad we just heard the impressive and strong testimony of a child victim, which was read out by our friend from Haiti just a couple of moments ago.

It is in the memory of the victims that we reaffirm our resolve to remember the injustices committed and to ensure that they will never be forgotten. As States Members of the United Nations, we have the obligation to inform and to educate future generations about the causes and consequences of the transatlantic slave trade and to make sure that such an atrocious and systematic abuse of human rights will never happen again.

Sadly, even today, slavery-like practices continue. Even today, the abhorrent practice of turning one's fellow human being into a commodity to be sold for a profit continues. Modern forms of slavery — such as trafficking in persons and human organs, sexual slavery, child labour, forced marriage and the sale of children — continue to persist in many parts of the world.

Today's victims of contemporary forms of slavery tend to belong to the poorest and most vulnerable and marginalized social groups in their respective societies. Very often, they do not have the power to defend their rights because of fear, ignorance or vulnerability. It is therefore all the more important that we, the States Members of the United Nations, speak out on their behalf. We must join forces to defend human rights and human dignity in all circumstances.

Today we pay tribute to the victims of the transatlantic slave trade, but let us learn from the past. Let us commit to create a future in which slavery in all its forms is eradicated and in which the human dignity of every human being is respected in all parts of the world.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of the United States, the host country.

Mr. Barton (United States of America): It is a great honour for me today to recall the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade: the more than 10 million men, women and children who, chained in darkness, hungry and sick, were taken across the Atlantic Ocean and into bondage, often to my own country's shores. On the anniversary of the day in 1807 when the British Empire outlawed the slave trade, we recommit ourselves to achieving universal human rights and delivering on the promise of freedom. We do so while mindful of the cruelties of the past and determined to confront the injustices of the present.

Slavery continues in pernicious forms today. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates that more than 200,000 children are forced to wield weapons in conflict, 5 million are bonded labourers and another million, mainly girls, are forced into prostitution. The IOM reports that hundreds of thousands of people of all ages are trafficked across borders and into slavery each year. That must end, and the actions we must take to end slavery and trafficking are clear.

Together, we must protect victims, fully implement existing laws against trafficking and prosecute traffickers. With improved victim identification, stronger medical and social services and increased public awareness, the men, women and children who have suffered this scourge can overcome the bonds of modern slavery, receive protection and justice and reclaim their rights and liberties.

Today, as we recommit ourselves to ending slavery and human trafficking, we should take inspiration from those who broke the shackles and stood up to cruelty in generations past. We must carry on their struggle to ensure the triumph of our shared values: tolerance, justice and respect for the dignity, common humanity and freedom of all human beings. We must carry on their struggle until every human being is free.

The Acting President: I shall now invite Ms. Lawri Lala Moore, President of the United Nations Jazz Society, to perform a musical recital.

Ms. Moore: I am African American; the guitarist who is accompanying me is from Zambia. We are going to do a song entitled "Strange Fruit".

The members of the General Assembly heard a musical performance.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, who will speak on behalf of the Caribbean Community and also introduce our featured speaker.

Mr. Gonsalves (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): I have the distinct honour of delivering this statement on behalf of the 14 member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

One of the greatest artists of our Caribbean civilization, the late Robert Nesta Marley, once sang in his song "Slave Driver":

"Every time I hear the crack of a whip
My blood runs cold.
I remember on the slave ship
How they brutalized my very soul."

It is that brutalization that brings us together on this International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade for, as Bob Marley makes clear, the slave ship was beyond an indignity. It was beyond barbarism. It was beyond inhuman. It was, apart from the physical atrocities, a brutalization of the psyche of a people so violent and enduring that it has created a shared cultural memory of the trauma — a collective memory that lives so vividly in the souls of those who have died that it is bequeathed to those of us who live today and to those yet unborn. For the CARICOM member States at the United Nations, it is a scar that is 14 countries wide and 400 years deep. For the world, it remains a festering sore on the conscience of humanity.

That scar on our Caribbean soul remains to this day a noise in our blood and an echo in our bones. It is given voice and flesh every day through our cultural expressions, each of which is shaped and informed by this peculiar legacy. You hear in the words that we speak and in our songs of struggle and freedom. You see it in the way that we dress and the way that we move. You taste in the foods we eat. You recognize it in the similarities and surviving traditions between our brothers and sisters on the African continent and their violently uprooted kin. You feel it in a Caribbean civilization that instinctively and comprehensively rejects oppression, subjugation and exploitation, even as the descendants of enslaved Africans, slavemasters and indentured labourers have managed to

miraculously and triumphantly craft a peaceful and harmonious societal fabric from the disparate threads of brutality, misery and rebellion. As the theme of this year's remembrance activities recognizes, our vibrant culture, in and of itself, is an eloquent expression of our hard-won freedom.

CARICOM member States are grateful for our continuing partnership with the African Union, the wider United Nations membership and the United Nations Secretariat, particularly the Department of Public Information, and for their support of this annual recognition and honour of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. Draft decision A/64/L.50, adopted today, represents the strength of the global consensus regarding the importance of this International Day of Remembrance.

Similarly, CARICOM wishes to highlight the central importance of resolution 64/15, which welcomes CARICOM's initiative to erect, at a place of prominence at United Nations Headquarters, a permanent memorial in acknowledgement of the tragedy and in consideration of the legacy of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. The central importance of that initiative to CARICOM cannot be overstated. We encourage Member States to assist in the construction of the permanent memorial through contributions to the Trust Fund for the permanent memorial, which is administered by the United Nations Office for Partnerships.

We are most grateful to those States that have already contributed to the fund and especially thankful to those that have made multiple pledges and contributions. In that regard, CARICOM offers special commendations to the Government and the people of India, who have demonstrated noteworthy and particular generosity in their support of this effort.

The slave ship, and the systematic and abhorrent exploitation that it represents, can never be forgotten. Today, we honour the memory of the victims of the slave trade — those who perished on the journey and those black survivors who triumphed over unimaginable adversity to shape new independent nations of free men and women. We pay special tribute this year to Haiti, the first nation to break the shackles of subjugation and the enduring seat of our Caribbean strength and pride. As our Haitian brothers and sisters confront the catastrophe of recent earthquakes, we have no doubt that, with the help of the international

community, they will triumph, as they have triumphed over all prior adversities. We in CARICOM also salute the memory of the indigenous peoples of our region — the Arawak, the Kalinago and the Garifuna inhabitants — whose tales of extermination through disease and genocide are also entwined with our own redemption song.

According to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's statement today, "those who controlled the transatlantic slave trade made huge profits from death, misery and exploitation" (*supra*). Their profit was our tragic loss, both on the African continent and throughout its far-flung diaspora. That loss is a debt that remains unpaid on humanity's ledger book. Today's event and future remembrances represent the tiniest of down payments on that historical debt. This day also stands as a rebuke to those who profited, those who ignored and those who justified the horrors of slavery and the slave trade. Today, we honour, we remember and we shall never forget.

It is also be my distinct honour and pleasure, on behalf of CARICOM, to introduce the keynote speaker for this special commemorative event, Mr. Barrymore Anthony Bogues. To do justice to Mr. Bogues's impressive and extensive experience would require far more time than is allocated to me today. With apologies to Mr. Bogues for the necessary brevity, I shall sketch some of his tremendous accomplishments in academia, politics and culture.

Mr. Bogues is Professor of Africana Studies at Brown University in Rhode Island, where he has taught since 1999. Professor Bogues has also lectured at Howard University in Washington, D.C., the University of the West Indies in Jamaica, Dartmouth College and the University of Cape Town, South Africa, where he is now an honorary research professor.

Professor Bogues's scholarship operates at the intersections of political theory, intellectual history, cultural studies, literary theory and philosophy, and he has found this intersection to be a busy one indeed. He has authored four books, with another four soon to be published. He has written scores of articles in scholarly journals and has made over 100 distinguished lectures and presentations to special conferences, including lectures on slavery, abolition and post-colonial societies.

Professor Bogues, who was a special assistant to former Jamaican Prime Minister Michael Manley, is

the recipient of countless awards for scholarship and instruction, including the Brown University Presidential Citation, a Royce Family Professorship in Teaching Excellence and the Middle Atlantic Writers Association Distinguished Writer Award, to name but a few.

It is also appropriate, given Mr. Bogues's extensive scholarship in the areas of Caribbean culture, particularly music, and his work in visual media, that he is with us today as we express our freedom through culture. Without any further ado, I would like to introduce Professor Tony Bogues.

The Acting President: In accordance with the decision taken earlier, I now give the floor to Professor Tony Bogues of Brown University.

Mr. Bogues: I would like to begin my remarks this afternoon with words of tribute to Professor Rex Nettleford, who delivered the inaugural keynote lecture at the 2007 commemoration at the General Assembly.

Professor Nettleford was not only Vice-Chancellor of the University of the West Indies, where I studied and taught for some years, but also an individual whose vision and institutional capacities were central to cultural and educational institution-building in the Caribbean. Besides, he was an extraordinary intellectual and creative artist, one whose work on history, politics and various aspects of African diaspora cultural forms have left us with a formidable legacy.

Of special note to us here was his work on the UNESCO Slave Route Project. One of his many felicitous phrases was his naming of the slave plantations as the "cane-piece", to describe the contemporary traces upon the social, political and cultural life of plantation slavery in the Americas. If members will permit me, I would like to dedicate these remarks to him.

We are here today at perhaps one of most complex moments in our modern history as a human species. Over the last decade or so, we have witnessed legal, political and philosophical debates about historical episodes that continue to haunt our world. Of course many of these debates have a genealogy that can be traced back to the post-1945 period and the attempt of the world community to think and act against genocide. In these debates, we were grappling with the relationship of justice to historical wrongs.

In our recent memory, perhaps one of the most spectacular instances of this debate and its concrete implications was the truth and reconciliation process in South Africa. That experience has illustrated to us that history is not a faded memorial fact; nor it is simply just the past. We understand better today how the traces of history congeal into structural legacies to which we must pay attention.

We can readily acknowledge that the world today is a different place than it was in 1945. It was the December 1960 United Nations Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples that established the formal international political framework for the self-government of over 700 million inhabitants of this planet.

But what the United Nations declared in 1960 was a status already achieved in a single Caribbean territory, 156 years before, when Jean-Jacques Dessalines transformed the French colony of Saint Domingue into Haiti. The 1805 Haitian Constitution, which followed the 1804 declaration of political independence, abolished slavery forever and attempted to eradicate all of the 128 distinctions based on colour that had organized the colony's economic, social and cultural life. And that Constitution asserted that, now, all Haitians citizens were black, including the Poles, Germans and white women who had remained faithful to the cause of the revolution.

This particular article overthrew the then-dominant hierarchical conceptions of human beings as racially classifiable through biology, skin shade and phenotype. The Constitution therefore was an extraordinary achievement. It was in many ways the zenith of a revolutionary war against a social system in which human beings were deemed, as the Caribbean historian Elsa Goveia so eloquently remarked, "property in persons".

This war against slavery had many roots and branches, as the Haitian historian Jean Fouchard makes clear. The various Maroon struggles crystallised in a revolutionary war against the slavery of the French colonial State in 1791. The names that we honour today and others that have been silenced by the frames through which we tell historical narratives beckon us to reflect on this commemorative occasion: an occasion to remember the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. The names of Toussaint Louverture, Sans-Souci, Macaya, Fatima, Boukman and Macandal, however, beckon us not so much to reflect on the

victims of slavery, but perhaps to reflect on the ideas of freedom that emerged and were produced by the ex-slaves of Haiti.

Oftentimes, in reflecting upon Atlantic slavery, we use the word "tragedy" to describe the human horrors of that social, political and economic system. But when we think of an event as tragic, we often imagine it as a singular one that causes great suffering and distress. We then see the event as a little out of the ordinary, something to be quickly healed without paying due attention to its consequences. In addition, when we create a memory about tragedy, in terms of the Atlantic slave trade, we focus on whips and lashes and the apparatuses of power and domination that marked human flesh. And these we must never forget. For the pain of the lash, the whipping, the capacity of one to place another under the rule of arbitrary individual will, to make another person non-human, to create a living corpse, a living dead — all these things we recall because they must never occur again.

But in recalling them, we might also want to name them. So, what should we name Atlantic racial slavery? What should we name the system in which millions of Africans became captives and then slaves in the Atlantic world? Yes, it was tragic. But was it a single event? Atlantic racial slavery operated as a system of human domination for over four centuries. It was an historical event of *longue durée*, producing and reproducing itself as a complete social system. Such a system of continuous human domination is an historical process that is of catastrophic proportions. Now, processes of historical catastrophe do begin in an original event, which then becomes repeatable. In this regard, racial slavery was a repeatable event over a lengthy historical period. As such, it then became the generative act of societies, shaping their contours.

Within the process of historical catastrophe, the boundaries of time are porous, because historical catastrophic events leave traces, and the act of memory becomes a conscious one that strives to impose order on the fragments of history. There is, however, one foundational feature of all historical catastrophic events. It is the overarching drive of power to reduce human beings to a nothingness. It is the drive, in the words of Hannah Arendt, to make the "human" in the human being superfluous. Or as Frantz Fanon remarks, it is a drive to create zones of non-being for the human. This drive to abduct the human from being human, to create conditions in which the human is obliterated so

that violence, cruelty and various forms of torture become norms: these are the signs and ways of life that mark the historical catastrophic event.

But historical processes never produce just one thing. They are always complex and multifaceted, and it is from this perspective that I wish to make brief remarks on freedom and the dual Haitian revolutions. When we think about events in the Caribbean colony of Saint Domingue between 1791 and 1804, we tend to do so with a general sweep and call them the Haitian revolution. This makes it easy for us, but such a simple naming might obscure the profound world significance of the events in Saint Domingue and then in Haiti. The dual revolution was, in the words of the late Jamaican Prime Minister Michael Manley, a hinge of history.

When the first major outbreak began in the northern region of Saint Domingue, the Atlantic world was dominated by plantation life and racial slavery. There had been many slave revolts, but this was the first rebellion that had become a revolution.

Many historians, including the Trinidadian C. L. R. James in his now-classic *The Black Jacobins*, have argued about the relative weight and influence upon the dual revolution of the ideas of the French revolution, Ki-Kongo political ideas or the Mande Charter in West Africa, which inaugurated a regime of universal human rights after the Arab slave traders were expelled from Mali. That Charter, which proclaimed that every human life is a life, politically rethought the basis on which rights could be organized. The Charter proclaimed that rights should be organized on the basis of human life, not on the basis of citizenship or political obligation.

I think that that it is safe to say that all three streams, as well as the concepts and practices of voodoo, influenced the outcome and the shape of the Haitian revolution.

However, it was the experiences of the slaves, of being property in the person, of being a corpse that speaks while having all the requirements of politics, that is of speech, that shaped the horizons of the ex-slave and the possibilities of freedom. It was a possibility so distinctive that one French colonial official remarked in consternation, "the blacks have their own philosophy of freedom".

It is accurate to see the revolution as having two distinct and related phases. The first phase ends with the declaration of the 1801 Constitution promulgated

by Toussaint Louverture, which declares the end of slavery and of the declaration of dominion status for the colony. Napoleon was of course not having any of this, and as he wrote to the English foreign minister in 1801,

"[In] the course which I have taken of annihilating the black government at [Saint Domingue] I have been less guided by considerations of commerce and finance than by the necessity of stifling in every part of the world disquiet. ... If not done so, the sceptre of the new world would sooner or later [have] fallen into the hands of the blacks."

The first phase of the Haitian revolution therefore had to be stopped in order not to encourage the idea of black self-government. We are, of course, aware of the rest of the story: that Toussaint Louverture was taken to France and died in one of Napoleon's jails. His removal from the ex-slave colony opened up new forms of struggle against the French colonial Power, and in that violent struggle the French Army was defeated and the colony became independent Haiti.

So, there were two revolutions, one against slavery and the other against colonial domination. Both were related, and for the Haitians the struggle for political independence was a guarantee against any return to slavery.

But after slavery and independence, what new ways of life were possible? What would freedom look like? This has been a difficult question to answer, but I think we can safely say that two concerns animated the ex-slaves.

The first one had to do with the form of labour itself. Who should own the products of one's labour? How should one use the surpluses of one's labour? How should that be determined? This was a knotty issue raised by the dual Haitian revolution and one that was never fully answered, but it was posed when many of the ex-slaves opposed the labour codes established both by the French colonial Government and then in 1801 by Toussaint Louverture himself. From the inception of wage labour as a form of human activity, this question of the relationship of labour to freedom has been a knotty one. Because of their experiences of being property in the person, the ex-slaves grappled with this thorny issue, although they may not have provided the answers we are looking for.

The second question they posed was this: What should freedom look like? Was freedom to be an ideal and therefore something to striven for and then actualized? Could one separate the conditions for freedom from freedom itself? The answer to this question came very quickly in the dual Haitian revolution. For the ex-slaves, freedom as a human activity was about overcoming obstacles, it was about having the capacity to act, and in the final analysis it was about human creativity. Human rights were foundation-stones, yes. But by themselves — without the capacity to create, to make one's self and community — they could not be realized.

These were the issues that this dual revolution placed before human consciousness and our history. The dual Haitian revolution began to be isolated and strangled as Thomas Jefferson reversed the initial United States position, and when, as the price of diplomatic recognition, France demanded payment of over 100 million gold francs. This was then followed by external occupation by the United States in the early twentieth century. These external conditions created internal difficulties for Haiti and would make the ordinary Haitian ask: In the end, what kind of "free" is this?

Because the dual Haitian revolution posed these questions about freedom, the revolution was of world significance. No other revolution of the period, neither the American nor the French, posed these issues. It would seem to me that in commemorating and remembering the Atlantic slave trade with a focus on Haiti, we would not want to reframe Haiti as an outcast nation of the West, but rather embrace its historical contribution to human freedom as one central element in the making of the modern world.

From that perspective, how we frame the rebuilding of Haiti after the disaster of 12 January 2010 is a critical question. Do we continue with more of the same? For instance, do we continue policies that, everyone now agrees, impacted adversely on the rice industry of Haiti, forcing thousands of Haitians into Port-au-Prince? Or do we frame policy along the lines of an equitable, just and interdependent society?

In the end, the memory of the ex-slaves and their historical achievements beckons the international community to rethink policies of trade, of aid, of what constitutes economic development, of how to tackle the question of global inequities. Perhaps once again in this instance, as we rethink these issues, Haiti may lead the way.

The Acting President: I now invite Ms. Kaissa Doumbe Mouloungou and Mr. Anthony Cedras to present a musical performance.

The members of the General Assembly heard a musical performance.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded the commemorative meeting on the occasion of the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to conclude its consideration of agenda item 116?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.



General Assembly

Sixty-fourth session

81st plenary meeting

Monday, 29 March 2010, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

President Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Hackett (Barbados), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Reports of the Fifth Committee

The Acting President: The General Assembly will now consider the reports of the Fifth Committee under agenda items 130, 132, 138, 141 and 142.

I request Ms. Yuliana Zhivkova Georgieva of Bulgaria, Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee, to introduce, in one intervention, the reports of the Committee that are before the Assembly.

Ms. Georgieva (Bulgaria), Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee: I have the honour today to present to the General Assembly the reports of the Fifth Committee that contain recommendations on issues that require action during the first part of the resumed sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

The Fifth Committee met from 1 to 19 March 2010 and held five plenary meetings and numerous rounds of informal consultations and informal informal consultations. I therefore have the honour to present the following brief report on the work of the Fifth Committee.

With regard to agenda item 130, entitled "Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations", the Committee recommends to the General Assembly, in paragraph 6 of its report contained in document A/64/596/Add.1,

the adoption of a draft resolution, which the Committee adopted without a vote.

On agenda item 132, the Fifth Committee recommends, in paragraphs 8 and 9 of its report contained in document A/64/548/Add.2, entitled "Programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011", the adoption of two draft resolutions. Draft resolution I deals with special subjects relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011, and draft resolution II relates to conditions of service for the ad litem judges of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, which the Committee adopted without a vote.

Under agenda item 138, entitled "Joint Inspection Unit", the Committee recommends to the General Assembly, in paragraph 6 of its report contained in document A/64/724, the adoption of a draft resolution that was adopted without a vote.

The report of the Committee under agenda item 141, entitled "Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 48/218 B, 54/244 and 59/272", is contained in document A/64/723. In paragraph 6 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution that it adopted without a vote.

Finally, under agenda item 142, entitled "Administration of justice at the United Nations", the Committee recommends, in paragraph 7 of its report contained in document A/64/582/Add.1, the adoption of a draft decision that it adopted without a vote.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.



I wish to thank delegations for their cooperation and to assure them that the changes made in the course of the Fifth Committee's 27th formal meeting have been duly taken into account and are reflected in the draft resolutions and reports before the Assembly.

The Acting President: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the reports of the Fifth Committee that are before the Assembly today.

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote. The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Fifth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records.

May I remind members that, under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that

"When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, that is, either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the reports of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take decisions in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee, unless members are notified otherwise in advance.

Agenda item 130 (continued)

Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/64/596/Add.1)

The Acting President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution, entitled "Towards an accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat". The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 64/259).

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 130.

Agenda item 132 (continued)

Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/64/548/Add.2)

The Acting President: The Assembly has before it two draft resolutions recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 8 of its report. We will now take a decision on draft resolutions I and II.

We turn first to draft resolution I, entitled "Special subjects relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011". The Fifth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 64/260).

The Acting President: Draft resolution II is entitled "Conditions of service for the ad litem judges of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda". The Fifth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 64/261).

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 132.

Agenda item 138

Joint Inspection Unit

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/64/724)

The Acting President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

We will now take a decision on the draft resolution, entitled "Report of the Joint Inspection Unit for 2009 and programme of work for 2010". The Fifth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 64/262).

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 138.

Agenda item 141

Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 48/218 B, 54/244 and 59/272

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/64/723)

The Acting President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

We will now take a decision on the draft resolution. The Fifth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 64/263).

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 141.

Agenda item 142 (continued)

Administration of Justice at the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/64/582/Add.1)

The Acting President: The Assembly has before it a draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report.

We will now take action on the draft decision. The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 142, as well as its consideration of all the reports of the Fifth Committee before it.

Agenda item 128 (continued)

International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991

Letter from the Secretary-General (A/64/710)

Letter from the President of the Security Council (A/64/727)

The Acting President: In document A/64/710, the Secretary-General transmits a letter dated 1 March 2010 from Judge Patrick Robinson, President of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, regarding the case of the Prosecutor v. Popović et al.

In document A/64/727, the President of the Security Council transmits to the President of the General Assembly the text of Council resolution 1915 (2010) of 18 March 2010, whereby the Council, inter alia, decided

"that the total number of ad litem judges serving at the International Tribunal may temporarily exceed the maximum of twelve provided for in article 12, paragraph 1, of the Statute of the International Tribunal, to a maximum of thirteen at any one time, returning to a maximum of twelve by 30 June 2010, or upon completion of the Popović case if sooner".

May I take it that the Assembly decides that the total number of ad litem judges serving at the International Tribunal may temporarily exceed the maximum of 12 provided for in article 12, paragraph 1, of the Statute of the International Tribunal, to a maximum of 13 at any one time, returning to a maximum of 12 by 30 June 2010, or upon completion of the Popović case if sooner?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 128.

Agenda item 112 (continued)

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(j) Appointment of three ad litem judges of the United Nations Dispute Tribunal

Letter from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/64/664)

The Acting President: Members will recall that by its resolution 63/253 of 24 December 2008, the General Assembly decided, *inter alia*, to appoint three ad litem judges for a term of one year each to address the problem of the backlog of cases being transferred from the old system to the Dispute Tribunal.

At its sixty-third session, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Internal Justice Council, appointed the following persons as ad litem judges of the Dispute Tribunal for a one-year term of office beginning on 1 July 2009: Mr. Michael Adams (Australia), Mr. Jean-François Cousin (France) and Ms. Nkemdilim Amelia Izuako (Nigeria).

In document A/64/664, the Chairperson of the Internal Justice Council has indicated that the Council feels that

“the threat of the United Nations Dispute Tribunal being ‘swamped’ by the influx of new cases ‘before it has really got up and running’ would ‘severely prejudice the implementation of the new system’”.

The Internal Justice Council has therefore advised the Secretary-General that “this undesirable result could be avoided if the terms of office of the current ad litem judges were to be extended for a further 12 months”.

On the recommendation of the Fifth Committee, the General Assembly took a decision earlier today to extend the tenure of three ad litem judges of the Dispute Tribunal for one additional year beginning on 1 July 2010. The Internal Justice Council has recommended the extension of the terms of office of the following three ad litem judges for an additional one-year term of office beginning on 1 July 2010: Michael Adams (Australia), Jean-François Cousin (France) and Nkemdilim Amelia Izuako (Nigeria).

May I therefore take it that the Assembly wishes to extend the terms of office of the three ad litem judges Michael Adams, Jean-François Cousin and Nkemdilim Amelia Izuako for an additional one-year term of office beginning on 1 July 2010?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I also take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (j) of agenda item 112?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 7 (continued)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

**Request for the inclusion of an additional sub-item in the agenda of the sixty-fourth session:
Elections to fill vacancies in principal organs:
Election of a member of the International Court of Justice (A/64/236)**

The Acting President: The General Assembly will now take up a request submitted by the Secretary-General in document A/64/236 relating to the election of a member of the International Court of Justice.

In his note, the Secretary-General informed the General Assembly of the resignation of Judge, former Vice-President and former President Shi Jiuyong as a member of the International Court of Justice effective 28 May 2010. A vacancy in the Court will therefore occur on 28 May 2010.

The agenda of the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly does not contain a sub-item on election of members of the International Court of Justice.

The Secretary-General has therefore deemed it necessary to request, pursuant to rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the inclusion in the agenda of the current session of an additional sub-item entitled “Election of a member of the International Court of Justice”, under agenda item 110.

Owing to the nature of the item, unless there is an objection, may I take it that the General Assembly agrees that the relevant provision of rule 40 of the rules of procedure, which would require a meeting of the General Committee on the question of the inclusion of this additional sub-item on the agenda, could be waived?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I take it that the General Assembly, on the proposal of the Secretary-General, wishes to include in the agenda of the current session, an additional sub-item entitled “Election of a

member of the International Court of Justice", as a sub-item of agenda item 110 under heading I?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to consider this sub-item directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: I should like to inform members that this additional sub-item becomes sub-item (c) of agenda item 110 on the agenda of the current session.

I should also like to inform the General Assembly that the election to fill the vacancy shall take place on 29 June 2010.

The meeting adjourned at 10.30 a.m.



General Assembly

Sixty-fourth session

Official Records

82nd plenary meeting

Thursday, 15 April 2010, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Hackett (Barbados), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silence.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Tribute to the memory of His Excellency Mr. Lech Kaczyński, President of the Republic of Poland

The Acting President: It is my sad duty, also on behalf of the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Ali Treki, to pay tribute to the memory of the late President of the Republic of Poland, His Excellency Mr. Lech Kaczyński, who was killed in a plane crash, together with his wife and many other people, including senior officials of Poland, on Saturday 10 April 2010.

This is a great tragedy and a terrible loss for Poland, whose pain and grief have been shared by the entire international community through a strong outpouring of sympathy and support, as also exemplified by this solemn meeting.

On behalf of the General Assembly, I request the representative of Poland to convey our condolences to the Government and the people of Poland and to the bereaved family of His Excellency Mr. Lech Kaczyński and to the families of those who perished.

May I now invite representatives to stand and observe a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of His Excellency Mr. Lech Kaczyński and those who perished with him.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Cape Verde, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Mr. Lima (Cape Verde) (spoke in French): I come to this solemn rostrum at this time of mourning and reflection on behalf of the African Group, but allow me first to offer my deepest condolences to the People's Republic of China, which has just suffered yet another disaster and is, as we speak, striving to save all the victims of a dreadful earthquake.

Paying tribute to an illustrious man who has left us is never easy. To do so in a context as tragic and sad as that of the death of the late President Lech Kaczyński, his wife and the eminent personalities who accompanied him is even harder. However, it is more than just an act of protocol or a diplomatic gesture for the Members of the United Nations to commiserate with the great Polish people, so marked by the upheavals of history and today orphans of one of their most prestigious sons, a seasoned and visionary statesman and a man of faith who made politics a tool for the benefit of a nation marching towards its future. From Solidarność to the steps of the presidential palace, from militant activism at Gdańsk to Warsaw Town Hall, his destiny opened the doors of history to him before snatching him suddenly from the love of his family and his people.

Throughout his long political career, he worked tirelessly for the benefit of the greatest number of

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people and embodied a Poland aware of its historical turmoil, proud of its national achievements and ambitious in preparing for its future. It was in quest of a singular memory that dwells at Katyn like a collective wound that he found his death, which represents the pain of an entire nation and a distressing page of a history that continues to reveal its dark side, haunted by ghosts and immeasurable suffering, branding nations and men – a history that he strove to understand in order better to guide its direction. With strong conviction and unshakeable faith in the Poland of the past and of posterity, he generated new hope for his country and a new vision for a future in the heart of Europe. His death is a terrible trial for the Polish people, who will surely overcome it together.

The African Group pays tribute to the memory of President Lech Kaczyński and conveys its most sorrowful condolences to his daughter, Martha, and to the bereaved families of all the victims of a tragedy that has struck all Poles and all peace-loving men and women throughout the world whom we represent. May he rest in peace in the land of his ancestors.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Bahrain, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Asian States.

Mr. Almansoor (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): In the life of nations and peoples, there are grave and unexpected tragedies that test the degree of their resilience and determination. What happened on 10 April was one of those moments in history as the Polish people lost their President, the late Lech Kaczyński, together with the First Lady and the elite of the country's military and civil leadership while on their way to commemorate the seventieth anniversary of the Polish martyrs of the Katyn massacre.

The Asian Group, which I have the honour to chair for the month of April, asked me to express, on its behalf, our deepest grief and sadness and our solidarity with the people and Government of Poland in the face of their great national calamity. Indeed, history will always remember the late President as a freedom fighter from his days as a militant of the democratic opposition to the former totalitarian system. In the 1970s and 1980s, he contributed greatly to the trade union activism that heralded the advent of the democratic system and its principles in Poland. At the expense of his own freedom, he subsequently contributed to the parliamentary life of his country,

both as a senator and as a deputy, and occupied several executive and ministerial offices, notably that of Minister of Justice, in which post he helped to fight criminality and to establish social justice.

History will also record his efforts to establish democracy in his capacity as a political activist, as Mayor of Warsaw and as President of the Republic. He worked to promote democratic values and practices in all aspects of life in Poland. The qualities of the late President of Poland are too numerous to list in such a brief statement. Suffice it to say, he was among the architects and most dedicated soldiers of democracy and human rights in his country and was instrumental in the making of contemporary history in this pivotal period in the life of his nation and the entire region. May he and all those who perished in the tragic accident rest in eternal peace and be forever remembered with affection and love, and may the people of Poland find solace knowing that the victim paid the ultimate price in the service of their country and nation.

Although this is a private occasion, before I conclude this statement I would like to express our sincere condolences, on behalf of the Asian Group, to the people and Government of China and to the families of the victims of the earthquake that led to many casualties. All the members of the Asian Group and the international community sympathize with China in this tragedy.

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Albania, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. Hoxha (Albania): On behalf of the Group of Eastern European States, I would like to extend our deepest condolences and express our full sympathy and solidarity to the people and the Government of Poland; to the families of President Kaczyński and First Lady Maria Kaczyńska; and to the families of other Polish leaders and staff, including the President of the Central Bank, the Army Chief of Staff and other top military commanders, the 15 members of Parliament and the Deputy Foreign Minister, to mention but a few of the 94 lives that were tragically taken away at the terrible event that occurred on 10 April. In that dark moment, Poland, a country that has paid such a high cost during its history, was suddenly robbed of many of its brightest minds and most dedicated public servants. This is a great loss for Poland and a loss for our

community of nations as well, especially for the Eastern European States.

President Kaczyński will be remembered for his outstanding, continued, 30-year active political activity in his country as one of the most prominent figures in the fight against totalitarianism, and for his contribution to the restoration and promotion of democracy in Poland and in Eastern Europe. As early as the 1970s, the young Lech Kaczyński was an activist in the pro-democratic, anti-communist movement in Poland, in the Workers' Defence Committee, and in the Independent Trade Union movement. In 1980, he became an adviser to the Inter-Enterprise Strike Committee in the Gdańsk Shipyards and the Solidarity movement. During the martial law introduced by the communists in 1981, he was interned as an anti-socialist element.

After his release from internment, he returned to trade union activities, becoming a member of the underground Solidarity movement. When, in late 1988, Solidarity was legalized, Lech Kaczyński was an active adviser to Lech Wałęsa and the Solidarity Citizens' Committee. He was elected senator in 1989, and over the past two decades he held various important high-profile responsibilities until he was elected President of Poland in 2005. Strengthening the rule of law and increasing social solidarity were the top priorities of his presidential agenda, which was so brutally interrupted on Saturday.

In these moments of grievance, our thoughts and prayers are with the Polish people. Poland felt "shock at the immensity of its loss", as one prominent newspaper wrote at the sight of so many people of all ages and political persuasions, families, and groups of boys and girls gathered in central Warsaw holding flickering flames, candles in the red and white colours; united in grief, pain and sorrow, but also in care for their nation, their democracy and the fruit of freedom to which President Kaczyński contributed so much.

We feel their pain and sorrow and express our hopes that with resilience and strength they will be able to overcome this exceptionally tragic moment.

The Acting President: I give the floor to the representative of Paraguay, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. Dos Santos (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I take the floor in order to voice, on behalf of the Group of Latin American States and Caribbean States, our great sadness and condolences at the tragic loss of the President of the Republic of Poland, Lech Kaczyński, and his First Lady, the Deputy Foreign Minister, as well as other leaders and figures accompanying him to the site of the commemoration of the Katyn massacre on 10 April.

The grief and mourning that have unexpectedly overwhelmed the people of Poland and the entire world as the result of an air crash only reminds us of the fragility of our lives and that all human beings without exception are subject to the whims of fate.

At this very difficult and sad time for our sister Republic of Poland, the members countries of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States wish to convey to the families of the victims and to the Government and people of Poland our most heartfelt support and sympathy. We trust that the people and authorities of Poland will be able to find together the necessary energy to resume their institutional life as swiftly as possible through the democratic process, despite the harsh trial of losing their political elite. That would be the best way to commemorate President Kaczyński and those who died with him in order to perpetuate the legacy of promoting inspirational democratic transition, freedom and human dignity.

The Acting President: I give the floor to the representative of Andorra, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

Mr. Casal de Fonsdeviela (Andorra) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the Group of Western European and other States, I would like to extend to the people and the Government of Poland our deepest condolences for all those who perished in that tragic airplane crash. Our hearts and thoughts go out particularly to the victims' families and all their loved ones.

The loss of President Lech Kaczyński, the First Lady, and so many political, military, church and cultural leaders is such a national tragedy that we are inspired at this moment to offer the people of Poland our sincerest expressions of support. President Kaczyński's death represents a great loss for all nations that share the values of liberty and democracy here at the United Nations. We know that President Kaczyński stood firmly by these principles throughout his life. Thanks to the dedication of people like him, Poland

has a legitimate framework of laws and institutions that provides continuity even in the aftermath of such an enormous blow.

Allow me to express, on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States, our full confidence in the resilience of the Polish people and the legitimacy of their institutions. We are sure the Polish people will overcome this tragedy, never to forget the exceptional qualities that those we mourn today embodied throughout their lives.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of the United States, the host country.

Mr. Barton (United States of America): On behalf of President Obama, Secretary Clinton and the American people, it is with great sorrow that I offer our deepest condolences to the Government and the people of Poland for their tragic loss.

President Kaczyński will be long remembered and sorely missed. He played a key role in the Solidarity movement and in the advancement of democracy in this country. He was a champion of freedom and human rights not just in Poland, but around the world.

The loss of the President, his wife Maria and numerous distinguished senior public servants who helped to shape Poland's inspiring democratic transformation is an enormous tragedy that is felt deeply by all of us. The United States joins the international community and the people of Poland in mourning their untimely passing. Let their inspirational leadership and the memory of their courageous sacrifice guide Poland and the world towards the advancement of human freedom, equality and dignity for all.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Poland.

Mr. Sobków (Poland): I never would have expected that my first address to this Assembly as the new person in charge of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Poland to the United Nations would be at a time when my nation is overflowing with grief, shock, pain and profound sorrow.

The tragic accident that took place on 10 April near Smolensk in Russia took the lives of some of Poland's finest men and women, who were on the way

to the ceremonies commemorating the seventieth anniversary of the Katyn massacre.

As members know, among the 96 victims were His Excellency Mr. Lech Kaczyński, President of Poland, Mrs. Maria Kaczyńska, the First Lady, representatives of the country's highest authorities, high-level military and civilian leaders, other members of the official delegation and the crew.

Let me thank all those who have expressed their condolences and have joined us in their thoughts and prayers during this difficult time. Their compassion and heartfelt words of sympathy are very much appreciated by the people of Poland. Our special words of appreciation go to the authorities and the people of the Russian Federation, who immediately offered their help and support in dealing with this horrifying tragedy.

Agenda item 7 (continued)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

The Acting President: I now invite the attention of the General Assembly to document A/64/696, circulated under agenda item 39, "Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples". Members will recall that the General Assembly concluded its consideration of agenda item 39 at its 62nd plenary meeting, on 10 December 2009.

In order for the Assembly to consider the report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, it will be necessary to reopen consideration of agenda item 39.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to reopen consideration of agenda item 39?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Members will also recall that at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 18 September 2009, the General Assembly decided to allocate agenda item 39 to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee).

In order for the Assembly to take action expeditiously on the report, may I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to consider agenda item 39

directly in plenary meeting under heading A (Maintenance of international peace and security)?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 39 (continued)

Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (A/64/696)

The Acting President: The Assembly has before it a draft decision recommended by the Special Committee in paragraph 4 of its report. We shall now proceed to consider that draft decision.

The Assembly will now take action on the draft decision contained in paragraph 4 of the report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, which is entitled "Increase in the membership of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples". May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft decision?

The draft decision was adopted.

Mr. Benítez Versón (Cuba) (spoke in Spanish): Cuba welcomes the decision that the General Assembly has just adopted, by which the brotherly country of Nicaragua will become a full member of the Special Committee on Decolonization.

This year marks the end of the second International Decade for the Elimination of Colonialism, the period set by the General Assembly for the elimination of this scourge, a relic of another era. However, many of the decolonization goals that we agreed upon have yet to be achieved. In that context, it is now more crucial than ever that the work of the Special Committee on Decolonization continue.

The admission to membership in 2008 of the brotherly nation of Ecuador and today's admission of the Republic of Nicaragua is proof of the Decolonization Committee's relevance in the Latin American and Caribbean region. We are certain that the

work of the Committee will be strengthened through the admission of these countries. We wish the brotherly nation of Nicaragua every success as it assumes its new responsibilities as a member of the Special Committee on Decolonization.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 39?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 7 (continued)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

The Acting President: I shall now invite the attention of the General Assembly to document A/64/L.49, circulated under agenda item 48, "Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields", sub-items (b) and (f) of agenda item 53, "Follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States" and "Convention on Biological Diversity", respectively, and agenda item 114, "Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit".

Members will recall that the General Assembly concluded consideration of sub-items (b) and (f) of agenda item 53 at its 66th plenary meeting, on 21 December 2009.

As indicated in the footnote to document A/64/L.49, in order for the General Assembly to take action on the present proposal, it will be necessary to reopen consideration of sub-items (b) and (f) of agenda item 53 and to consider them directly in plenary meeting.

May I take it that is the wish of the General Assembly to reopen consideration of sub-items (b) and (f) of agenda item 53?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Members will also recall that, at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 18 September 2009, the General Assembly decided to allocate sub-items (b) and (f) of agenda item 53 to the Second Committee.

In order for the Assembly to take action expeditiously on the proposal, may I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to consider sub-items (b) and (f) of agenda item 53 directly in plenary meeting under heading B, "Promotion of sustained economic growth and sustainable development in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and recent United Nations conferences"?

It was so decided.

Agenda items 48, 53 and 114 (continued)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Sustainable development

(b) Follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

(f) Convention on Biological Diversity

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Draft decision (A/64/L.49)

The Acting President: We shall now proceed to consider draft decision A/64/L.49. In connection with the draft decision, I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Botnaru (Department of General Assembly and Conference Management): I would like to inform members that this oral statement is made in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

Under the terms of operative paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the draft decision, the General Assembly would decide that the general debate of the sixty-fifth session will be held from Thursday, 23 September to Saturday, 25 September and from Monday, 27 September to Thursday, 30 September 2010; that the meetings for the general debate on Friday, 24 September will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. and from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m., and the meetings on Saturday, 25 September will be held from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., and that these

arrangements shall in no way create a precedent for future General Assembly sessions.

The General Assembly would also decide to hold the two-day high-level review to assess progress made in addressing the vulnerabilities of small island developing States through the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation, pursuant to paragraphs 2 and 3 of General Assembly resolution 64/199, from Friday, 24 September to Saturday, 25 September 2010, beginning with an opening plenary meeting on 24 September from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and ending with a closing plenary meeting on 25 September from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.

The General Assembly would further decide to hold a high-level meeting as a contribution to the International Year of Biodiversity, pursuant to paragraph 23 of resolution 64/203, on Wednesday, 22 September 2010, consisting of an opening plenary meeting from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m., consecutive thematic panels from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m., and a closing plenary meeting from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m., taking into account that the plenary meeting of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly is scheduled from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

The General Assembly would decide, in this regard, that, on the third day of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly, the plenary meetings originally scheduled from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Wednesday, 22 September 2010 pursuant to annex I of resolution 64/184, will be held instead from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. on the same day.

As regards the schedule of meetings contained in operative paragraphs 1 and 2, the resources required for servicing these meetings during working hours from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekdays from Monday to Friday have been included in the calendar of conferences and meetings for 2010 and, accordingly, have been provided for within the programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011.

However, the meetings in the general debate to be held on Friday, 24 September 2010 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. and on Saturday, 25 September 2010 had not been planned for in the calendar of conferences and meetings for 2010, which implies overtime compensation to general service staff in support of

these meetings. Consequently, resources related to overtime for meeting servicing staff would be required.

In addition, other support functions from the Office of Central Support Services, the Department of Safety and Security and the Department of Public Information would also be required to provide sound engineering, conference room servicing, webcasting and safety and security services. The total additional requirements amount to \$139,600, comprised of \$65,600 under section 2, "General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management"; \$10,700 under section 27, "Public information"; \$21,100 under section 28D, "Office of Central Support Services"; and \$42,200 under section 34, "Safety and security".

As regards the schedule of meetings contained in operative paragraphs 3 and 4, it is recalled that, in the oral statement submitted by the Secretariat before the adoption of resolution 64/203, entitled "Convention on Biological Diversity", it was indicated that the one-day high-level meeting, including its thematic panel discussions, could be accommodated by using the resources allocated to servicing the General Assembly, provided that the General Assembly does not meet in parallel on the same date when the one-day high-level meeting is held.

However, given that the General Assembly will hold the High-level Plenary Meetings on the same day, the assumption that the morning and afternoon parallel thematic panel discussions and the closing plenary meeting on the Convention on Biological Diversity could use the resources allocated for servicing the General Assembly is no longer valid. As a result, these meetings are considered to be additions to the calendar of conferences and meetings for 2010 and require additional resources for interpretation services and related support services amounting to \$29,400, which is comprised of \$25,000 under section 2, "General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management", and \$4,400 under section 28 D, "Office of Central Support Services".

In total, the additional resource requirements stemming from the draft decision amount to \$169,000, comprising \$90,600 under section 2, \$10,700 under section 27 (Public Information), \$25,500 under section 28D (Office of Central Support Services) and \$42,200 under section 34 (Safety and Security).

Although it is estimated that a total amount of \$169,000 is required as a result of the draft decision, no additional provisions are requested, as the Secretariat will seek to identify areas from which resources can be redeployed to meet the requirements within the programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take action on draft decision A/64/L.49, entitled "High-level meetings of the General Assembly in September 2010".

May I take it the Assembly decides to adopt draft decision A/64/L.49?

The draft decision was adopted.

Mr. Viinanen (Finland), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The Acting President: On behalf of the President of the General Assembly, I should like to express my sincere thanks to Ambassador Park In-kook of the Republic of Korea, the facilitator of the informal consultations, who so ably conducted the discussions and complex negotiations to reach agreement on the dates of these meetings. I am sure that members of the Assembly join me in extending to him our sincere appreciation.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-items (b) and (f) of agenda item 48, as well as of agenda items 53 and 114.

Agenda item 7 (continued)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

The Acting President: Draft decision A/64/L.51 has been submitted in response to a letter dated 25 March 2010 from the Chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Plurinational State of Bolivia addressed to the President of the General Assembly, which has been issued as document A/64/732, by which he requests — on behalf of Cuba, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Paraguay, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and his own country — the convening of a plenary meeting of the General Assembly on 22 April to mark the first anniversary of International Mother Earth Day.

Members will recall that, at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 18 September 2009, the General Assembly decided to allocate agenda item 53 to the Second

Committee. Members will also recall that agenda item 53 remained open for consideration during the sixty-fourth session.

In order for the General Assembly to take action expeditiously on the proposal, may I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to consider agenda item 53 directly in plenary meeting under heading B (Promotion of sustained economic growth and sustainable development in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and recent United Nations conferences)?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 53 (continued)

Sustainable development

Draft decision (A/64/L.51)

The Acting President: We shall now proceed to consider draft decision A/64/L.51. In connection with that draft decision, I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Botnaru (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I would like to inform members that this oral statement is made in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

Under the terms of draft decision A/64/L.51, the General Assembly would decide to convene, on 22 April 2010, a special meeting of the General Assembly on the occasion of the International Mother Earth Day. With respect to the holding of that meeting, it should be noted that the related conference servicing requirements would be met within the planned number of meetings of the General Assembly and on the understanding that the Assembly would not hold any other meetings during the same time. Accordingly, the adoption of draft decision A/64/L.51 would not give rise to any additional requirements under the programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take action on draft decision A/64/L.51, entitled "Special meeting of the General Assembly on the occasion of the International Day of Mother Earth". May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft decision A/64/L.51?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 53.

Agenda item 111 (continued)

Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections

(c) Election of thirty members of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law

The Acting President: Members will recall that, at its 35th plenary meeting, on 3 November 2009, the General Assembly elected the following 28 States — Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Brazil, Colombia, the Czech Republic, Fiji, Gabon, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Kenya, Mauritius, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, Poland, Spain, Thailand, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, the United States of America and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela — as members of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law for a six-year term of office beginning on 21 June 2010. Therefore, those 28 States are not eligible for election.

Members will also recall that there remain two seats to be filled, one from among the African States and one from among the Latin American and Caribbean States. I should like to remind members that, as of 21 June 2010, the following States will continue to be represented on the Commission: Armenia, Bahrain, Benin, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Egypt, El Salvador, France, Germany, Greece, Honduras, Japan, Latvia, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Morocco, Namibia, Norway, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Therefore, those 30 States are also not eligible for election.

The General Assembly will now proceed to the election of two members to replace those members whose terms of office will expire on 20 June 2010.

In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, the election shall be held by secret ballot and there shall be no nominations. I should like to recall, however, paragraph 16 of General Assembly decision 34/401, whereby the practice of dispensing with the secret ballot for elections to subsidiary organs when the number of candidates corresponds to the

number of seats to be filled should become standard, unless a delegation specifically requests a vote on a given election.

In the absence of such a request, may I take it that the Assembly decides to proceed to this election on the basis of dispensing with the secret ballot?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: With regard to candidatures, I should like to inform members that, for the one seat from among the African States the Group has endorsed Botswana and for the one seat from among the Latin American and Caribbean States the Group has endorsed Paraguay.

Since the number of candidates of the two regional groups is equal to the number of seats to be filled by each group, may I take it that the General Assembly wishes to declare those candidates elected for a six-year term of office beginning on 21 June 2010?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: I congratulate Botswana and Paraguay, which have been elected members of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law for a six-year term of office beginning on 21 June 2010.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (c) of agenda item 111?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 112 (continued)

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(f) Appointment of members of the Committee on Conferences

Note by the Secretary-General (A/64/107)

The Acting President: Members will recall that, at its 35th plenary meeting, on 3 November 2009, the General Assembly took note of the appointment by its President of Côte d'Ivoire, Germany and the Syrian Arab Republic as members of the Committee on Conferences for a period of three years beginning on 1 January 2010.

Members will also recall that there remain four seats to be filled from among the African States, the Eastern European States and the Latin American and Caribbean States.

On the recommendation of the Chairs of the Group of African States and of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, the President of the General Assembly has appointed Nigeria, Panama and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela as members of the Committee on Conferences for a period of three years beginning on 1 January 2010.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of this appointment?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Regarding the remaining vacant seats from among the Eastern European States, the President of the General Assembly will continue to hold consultations with the regional Group.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (f) of agenda item 112.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.